A CONCISE BIOGRAPHICAL HISTORY OF RIYADHA MOSQUE SCHOLARS

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IN THE NAME OF GOD, THE MERCIFUL THE BENEFICIENT

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INTRODUCTION

RIYADHA MOSQUE: AN ACCOUNT ON ITS FOUNDATIONS

Picture 1.1 Front view of Riyadha Mosque, Lamu

Riyadha Mosque is among the most famous mosques in Lamu which was constructed in the year 1892 C.E. The mosque founding fathers played a major role in the dissemination of knowledge and propagation of Islam. This fact made the institution a landmark in the history of East Africa.

Habib Swaleh and Habib Abubakar Al-Hussein (Mwenye Manswabu) had very cordial and spiritual affiliation such that the latter bequeathed his farmland popularly known as *Dari ya Mtanga* to the former, to build an Islamic learning centre.[1]

In 1889 C.E and with the help of his friends, Habib Swaleh built a temporary wooden structure which was used as a place for teaching as well as for prayers. Initially, the centre was not a mosque. At that time, Habib Swaleh was the Imam of Sheikh Bilad Mosque situated at Langoni area, in the southern ends of Lamu town.

It is related that ,one day, a pious man by the name Ahmad Batweyh of Hadhramy origin visited the centre and intended to perform *i'tikaf* thinking that the place was a mosque. To his dismay, he was informed the place was only used for the purpose of learning. Although he was disappointed by this claim, he was impressed by the centre's academic standards. Hence, he made a *du'a* to Allah to make the place a great centre of worship. He then travelled back to his home country. [2]

[1] Swaleh M. Ali Badawy. (1989). *Ar-Riyadh baina madhihi wa hadhirihi.*
[2] Abdallah M. Bakthir. (1968). *Siri ya Nufusi – Tarekhe ya Riyadha na Mwenye Idarusi*

Upon his arrival in Hadhramout, Ahmad Batweyh informed his people on what he saw at Habib Swaleh's centre in Lamu. The Hadhramis were very impressed by his narrations and they immediately decided to deploy five teachers to Lamu in order to help Habib Swaleh. These teachers were; Sheikh Omar Salmin Bagufa, Ahmad Aqida, Salmin Bajabar, Basaidah and Ridhwan.[3]

Within a few years, the centre had gained a lot of recognition and the suggestion for upgrading the centre into a grand mosque and to have adjacent to it a Madrassah was planned. By this time, a world renowned Islamic scholar Sheikh Abdallah bin Muhammad Bakathir (d.1919) who hailed from Lamu had established links between Habib Swaleh and the Great Hadhrami Sufi Scholar Habib Ali bin Muhammad Al-Habshy[4]. Later on, Habib Ali Al-Habshy became a spiritual mentor and a very close friend of Habib Swaleh even though the two never met. The duo's means of communication were mainly by/through correspondence.

It was related that, Habib Ali Al-Habshy, had previously built a mosque at Tarim town, in Hadhramout province of Yemen and named it "Riyadha". Habib Swaleh , following in the footsteps of his friend and spiritual mentor, similarly, named the new mosque in Lamu "Riyadha". He also made efforts to see that the mosque at Lamu resembles (as much as possible) the one at Tarim.

Habib Ali Al-Habshy sent his student Sheikh Jamil Salim Bakabe, as a teacher to Lamu to teach his famous poetic book *Simt Durar* which relates on the life of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon Him) to Habib Swaleh's students[5]. Consequently, the book became so famous in Lamu. It was routinely being recited every Thursday night. Later on , a grand annual celebration was initiated at Riyadha Mosque to mark the birth of the Prophet (peace be upon Him) and the *Simt Durar* became the most popular poems recited during *Maulid* celebrations in East Africa.

In 1901 C.E the mosque was re-extended but retained its initial design and form. However in 1947 C.E, the son of Habib Swaleh, Sayyid Aidarus (d. 1968), renovated the mosque. He built the famous Green Dome and the Ribat Area. The Ribat structure, annexed to the main mosque, was particularly meant for studies and other religious functions.

Habib Swaleh's great grandson, Sharif Muhammad Bahsan (d. 1979), had a vision to build an academy adjacent to the Riyadha mosque. Although he had laid the foundations of the building, he died a year

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[3] Ibid
[4] Hon. Abubakar M. Badawy (personal communication, November 2, 2013)
[5] Ibid

before the official opening of the Academy in 1981 C.E. The Academy was named Maahad Thaqafah al-Islami.[6]

The Riyadha Mosque was re-extended again in 2008 C.E under the blessings of Habib Hussein bin Sayyid Ahmad Badawy (b. 1933) whereby the original interior mosque was expanded and the *Mihrab* had to be shifted from its original position. The original *Mihrab* was maintained for historical purpose.

[6] Abulkadir. M Ali Badawy (personal communication, August 10, 2013)

THE FOUNDERS OF RIYADHA MOSQUE

SAYYID ABUBAKAR AL-HUSSEIN – MWENYE MANSWABU (1828 – 1922)

Picture 1.2 Sayyid Abubakar Al-Hussein's photograph

Sayyid Abubakar bin Abdulrahman bin Abubakar bin Abdulrahman bin Abubakar bin Ahmad bin Abubakar bin Abdallah bin Shaykhan bin Al-Hussein bin Sheikh Abubakar bin Salim was born in Lamu in 1828. His mother, Hafswah bint Ahmad bin Abdulrahman bin Abubakar bin Ahmad Al - Hussein[7] is also from the well known *Sharifu* family from Lamu known as Al-Hussein of Hadhrami origin.

Mwenye Manswabu began his studies in Lamu and later travelled with Habib Abubakar Ashatry (Mwenye wa Maka) to Hejaz (Saudi Arabia) where he learnt under many scholars including the then Mufti of Mecca Sayyid Ahmad Zain Dahlan for a number of years[8].

To satisfy his immense quest for knowledge, Mwenye Manswabu ,then, travelled to Hadhramout where he spent time learning under one of the most celebrated Hadhrami scholars of the time Sayyid Aidarus bin Umar Al-Habshy. There are reports that he also spent time studying in Jerusalem.[9]

Before travelling to Hadhramout, Mwenye Manswabu was first appointed by Sultan Majid of Zanzibar (d. 1870) to serve as the *Qadhi* of the town of Daresalam in Tanzania. After Sultan Majid's death, Sultan Barghash (d. 1888) appointed him to be the *Qadhi* of Lamu. Later on, during the reign of Sultan Hamud (d. 1902) he was appointed the *Qadhi* of Chwaka, one of the districts of Zanzibar. At Chwaka, Mwenye Manswabu built a mosque and donated part of his properties as *waqf* to carter for the maintenance of the mosque[10].

[7] Ahmad Manswab Al – Ahdal (personal communication and notes, August 13, 2013)
[8] Ibid
[9] Anne K. Bang (2005). *Sufis and Scholars of the Sea*. New York. Taylor and Francis e-Library
[10] Swaleh M. Ali Badawy. (1989). *Ar-Riyadh baina madhihi wa hadhirihi.*

After a long service in Tanzania and Zanzibar, Mwenye Maswabu returned to Lamu to concentrate in teaching. He established Islamic educational circles at Masjid Rawdha which is situated at the sea front next to Lamu's harbour.

Mwenye Manswabu was also a talented poet and writer. He wrote many treatises which include the following poetic master pieces:

- *Tafsir ya Hamziya*
- *Tafsir ya Burdah*
- *Tafsiri ya Tabaraka dhul Ula*
- *Ahlul Kisaa.* Among others, all in Kiswahili.[11]

At Masjid Rawdha, one of Mwenye Manswabu's many students was Habib Swaleh. Mwenye Manswabu was very impressed by Habib Swaleh's academic excellence and integrity such that he decided to offer him a large piece of his farmland at *Dari ya Mtanga* so that Habib Swaleh could establish an academic centre.

Mwenye Manswabu's generosity knew no bounds. He also donated much in kind and materials during the construction of the Riyadha Mosque[12].

In fact, Mwenye Maswabu was the main sponsor and financier of Habib Swaleh's projects both in economic, social and spiritual aspects; during Habib Swaleh's tribulations with the people of Lamu when he introduced the using of tambourines inside the mosque during maulid celebrations – a tradition never done before by the people of Lamu – it was Mwenye Manswabu's scholarly response in defense of Habib Swaleh that ensured the people of Lamu accepted the tradition[13].

During his sunset years, Mwenye Manswabu rarely got out of Masjid Rawdha so that he is able to punctually observe all fardh prayers and academic sessions, he even ordered his bed to be brought inside the mosque due to old age[14].

Mwenye Manswabu was blessed with piety, knowledge, wealth and long life. He died in 1922 at the age of 94 years in Lamu. He was buried at the Langoni graveyard in Lamu.

[11] Unpublished works
[12] Swaleh. M. Ali Badawy (personal communication, August 20, 2013)
[13] Ibid
[14] Ibid

HABIB SWALEH (1852 – 1935 CE)

His name is Swaleh bin Alwy bin Abdallah bin Hassan bin Ahmad bin Abdallah bin Ahmad bin Harun bin Abdulrahman bin Ahmad bin Abdallah bin Sheikh Muhammad Jamaalu Leyl. His noble lineage is traced from Imam Ali bin Abi Talib (R.A). It is a well known historical fact that Imam Ali (R.A) was married to Fatimah al-Zaharai (R.A) who was the daughter of Prophet Muhammad (SAW). Imam Ali (R.A.) was also the first paternal cousin of the Prophet (SAW).

Habib Swaleh's father Sayyid Alwy was born and raised in the Comoros Islands. Like his ancestors, Sayyid Alwy grew up as a very devoted Qur'anic teacher[15]. He was also a talented tailor and was thus nicknamed *Fundi Aluwi* by his contemporary peers. In the Comoros Islands the title *fundi* (may literally be translated as Master in English) it may also be referred to mean a *teacher* especially the one who teaches the Qur'an. Sayyid Alwy married Maryam binti Ali, a Comorian native from the Nye Rajab clan and through her Habib. Swaleh was born in the year 1852 in Ikoni[16].

Habib Swaleh had the following brothers: Twahir, Abdullah, Abdulrahman (Mwenye Abudi) and Muhammad. Sayyid Alwy was blessed with a very long and fruitful life. When he died in 1895, he was well over a hundred years old[17].

The Young Habib Swaleh was brought up in a very religious and academic environment. His own father had inducted him in the learning of the Qur'an at a very tender age. As teenage boys, Habib Swaleh with the famous Zanzibari scholar Sayyid Abubakar bin Ahmad bin Smeit were put under the tutorship of the Great Comorian scholar Sayyid Muhammad bin Ahmad bin Abdullah (Mwenye Ba Hassan d. 1883). Sayyid Muhammad bin Ahmad bin Abdullah had acquired his knowledge in the Hejaz at the same time as scholars like the famous Mufti of Mecca Sayyid Ahmad bin Zayn Dahlan and Sheikh Ali bin Abdullah Al-Mazrui (d. 1896). Sayyid Muhammad bin Abdullah was an elder cousin of Habib Swaleh and was also the teacher of the famous Zanzibari scholar Sayyid Ahmad bin Abubakar bin Sumayt (d. 1925)[18].

In 1870, Habib Swaleh who was by then 18 year old travelled to Lamu to visit his uncle Sayyid Ali bin Abdullah (d. 1913) who had migrated to Lamu and settled there in 1847. The main reason for the visit

[15] Swaleh M. Ali Badawy. (1989). *Ar-Riyadh baina madhihi wa hadhirihi.*
[16] Ibid
[17] Ibid
[18] Anne K. Bang. (2005). *Sufis and Scholars of the Sea*. New York. Taylor and Francis e-Library

was to seek medication for an illness which had affected his legs.[19]

Upon reaching Lamu, Habib Swaleh took to learning under the then Lamu's renown scholars including his uncle, Sayyid Ali bin Abdullah. After a year, his father ordered him to return to the Comoros Islands and sent Habib Swaleh's elder brother, Sayyid Muhammad, to go along with him. By this time, Habib Swaleh had inadvertently been emotionally attached to Lamu and the thought of leaving the town was a very difficult experience for him but as any obedient son he did return to the Comoros[20].

Habib Swaleh was never comfortable with life in the Comoros after his travel to Lamu. It is said he was particularly unhappy with the levels of extravagant lifestyles of Comorian people especially during their wedding ceremonies during those days.

Habib Swaleh stayed in an isolated life at the Comoros Islands for about a year He totally refused to intermingle with his friends and family members. He became more determined??? in his quest to return to Lamu. This strange behavior worried his parents very much and after consult ting and on the advice of Sayyid Muhammad bin Abdullah (Mwenye Ba Hassan), Habib Swaleh's father allowed him to travel to Lamu. A jubilated Habib Swaleh moved to Lamu and never went back to the Comoros Islands.

In Lamu, Habib Swaleh became very active in studies and for many years learnt under very able scholars such as:

- Habib Sayyid Ali bin Abdallah Jamaalu Leyl
- Sheikh Abubakar bin Muhammad bin Abubakar Al - Maawy (Bwenye Kai) (d. 1882)
- Habib Abu Bakr bin Abdulrahman Al-Hussein (Mwenye Manswabu)
- Sheikh Ali bin Muhammad Al-Maawy (d.1924)
- Sayyid Ahdal bin Abu Bakr Al-Ahdal

After completion of his studies, Habib Swaleh was made the Imam of Sheikh Biladi Mosque in the Langoni area where he remained the Imam until the completion of the construction of Riyadha Mosque. At Sheikh Biladi and Riyadha mosques, Habib Swaleh taught many students who later became leading scholars in East and Central Africa. Among his most famous students include:

[19] Harith S. Al – Maawy (personal communication, February 23, 2014)
[20] Swaleh M. Ali Badawy (personal communication, August 20, 2013)

- Sheikh Salim Juma'an Al-Qaiswary
- Sheikh Muhammad bin Ali Al-Maawy
- Sheikh Ali bin Hassan Al-Qumury
- Sheikh Fadhil Khalifah Mansurin
- Sayyid Ahmad Badawy – his son
- Sayyid Aidarus – his son
- Sayyid Ali bin Sayyid Ahmad Badawy – his grandson[21].

Habib Swaleh married several women who bore him a number of children. This was probably one way of propagating and popularizing the mission of Riyadha Mosque across Lamu residents of different classes and strata.

Habib Swaleh's main achievement was the construction of the Riyadha Mosque. He was the pioneer scholar who revolutionized the system of Islamic education in the whole of East and Central Africa by introducing boarding facilities for students. When he opened his boarding Islamic school in Lamu in 1889 even the most famous English missionary schools in East Africa had not yet been established.

His other major achievement was the initiation of the annual Maulid Festival in Lamu which has become a major yearly international event. attracting visitors across the globe which has put Lamu in the world map as a religious centre.

Apart from being an expert in Qur'anic sciences, Habib Swaleh was also a very talented Muslim herbalist who specialized in Islamic traditional medicine. He lived a very humble and devoted religious life. He died in 1935 C.E in Lamu where his grave still attracts many visits from his followers.

Picture 1.3 Habib Swaleh's grave in Lamu.

[21] Indeed we are not able to give the whole list of Habib Swaleh's students here as they are many

THE SCHOLARS OF RIYADHA MOSQUE

SAYYID AHMAD BADAWY BIN HABIB SWALEH (1883 – 1939 CE)

Picture 1.5 Sayyid Ahmad Badawy's photograph

Sayyid Ahmad Badawy was born 1883 C.E in Lamu. His mother, Fatma bint Abu Bakr was of Comorian origin and was popularly known as Mwana Mkaa.

It is reported that, one day while Habib Swaleh was reading a biography of a the great Egyptian scholar Sheikh Ahmad Badawy of Tanta received the news that his wife had delivered a baby boy, Habib Swaleh thus named his first born son, Ahmad Badawy[22].

Sayyid Ahmad Badawy was raised up in a house of worship and learning. He grew up to be a very obedient and dedicated servant of Islam. He was blessed with a deep understanding and insight of life matters. He gained his knowledge from the well known scholars of Lamu during those days. These scholars include: Habib Swaleh- his father, Sheikh Abdallah bin Muhammad Bakathir who later on became his father in law, Sheikh Faysal bin Ali bin Abdallah Al-lamy (d. 1911) and Al-Habib Abu Bakr bin Abdulrahman Al-Hussein (Mwenye Manswabu)[23].

As a young adult, Sayyid Ahmad Badawy was already helping his father in disseminating knowledge at the Riyadha Mosque as his assistant. He spent most of his time engaging in either learning, teaching or curing people a discipline that he acquired from his father and Sayyid Muhammad Abi Tayyib, one of the scholars of Mecca, during his stay in Lamu.

[22] Swaleh M. Ali Badawy. (1989). *Ar-Riyadh baina madhihi wa hadhirihi.*
[23] Ibid

Sayyid Ahmad Badawy was a very eloquent speaker and dedicated teacher. He produced a huge number of students who later became renowned scholars. Among his many students are: his sons Sayyid Ali, Sayyid Muhammad (Shariff Dini), Sayyid Abdulrahman (Shariff Khitami), Sayyid Hassan (d. 2008), Sayyid Alwy (Mzee Mwenye) (d. 2009) and Sheikh Faraj Bwanamkuu (d. 2010), Sheikh Abdallah Khamis (d. 1975) and others.
Against many odds and limitations he managed to write two treatises:

- *Nadhm Risalat Jami'a* – incomplete
- His travels to Hadhramout.[24]

After returning from Hajj in the early 1930's C.E, he had travelled to Hadhramout on an academic visit where he met many great scholars of there. He was blessed with a big family of twenty one children including sons and daughters, In fact, all of Habib Swaleh's descendants pass through him. Sayyid Ahmad Badawy died just four years after his father's death in 1939 at an early age of 55 years. He was buried beside his father's grave in Lamu.

[24] Unpublished works

SAYYID AIDARUS BIN HABIB SWALEH (1883 – 1968 CE)

Picture 1.4 Sayyid Aidarus photograph

Sayyid Aidarus was born in Lamu in 1883. His mother, Aisha Bwansalale, was a native of Pate Island on the Lamu Archipelago. He was six months younger to his elder brother Sayyid Ahmad Badawy.

Sayyid Aidarus was brought up in a house of worship and learnt under a close eye of his father. At a very early age, he exhibited a great talent in the field of Islamic traditional medicine which he had acquired from his father and Sayyid Muhammad Abi Tayyib[25].

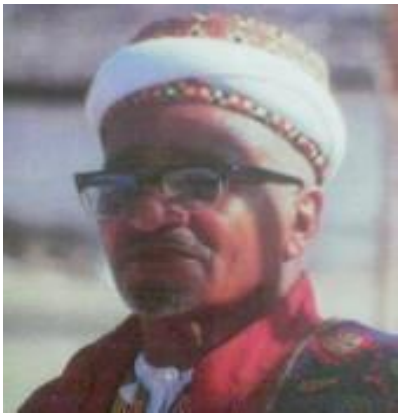
Sayyid Aidarus grew up to become a great Muslim herbalist who was able to cure many diseases. He composed a number of classical Islamic medicines. His upright character and strict stance made him win so much respect from the people of Lamu, young and old alike.

While his elder brother, Sayyid Ahmad Badawy, was given the responsibility of teaching and students affairs at the Riyadha Mosque, he was given the role of looking after his siblings, welcoming visitors and other socio - economic affairs of the Riyadha Mosque[26]. He devoted most of his time in curing people and teaching his students on/about Islamic traditional medicine. Despite being blessed with a long life he had only two daughters who both of them passed away when he was still alive[27]. He had an immense love for children and students.[28]

He was also credited as being the greatest renovator of the Riyadha Mosque. In 1947 he built the famous green dome and the Ribat area adjacent to the main mosque for academic purposes and other religious functions. After living a long life in the service of the Riyadha Mosque. He died in the year 1968 aged 85 years and is buried besides his father's grave in Lamu.

[25] Swaleh M. Ali Badawy. (1989). *Ar-Riyadh baina madhihi wa hadhirihi.*
[26] Harith S. Al – Maawy (personal communication, February 23, 2014)
[27] Fatma M. Ali Badawy (personal communication, August 10, 2013)
[28] Harith S. Al – Maawy (personal communication, February 23, 2014)

SAYYID ALI BIN SAYYID AHMAD BADAWY (1903 – 1988)



Picture 1.6 Sayyid Ali Badawy's photograph

Sayyid Ali was born in Lamu in 1903. He was the first son/child of Sayyid Ahmad Badawy. His mother, Aisha (popularly known as Makhale), was a daughter of the great Lamu scholar Sheikh Abdallah bin Muhammad Bakathir. Sayyid Ali grew up under the tutorship of his father and grandfather both of who were men of high caliber and integrity in religious and academic endeavors.

During his youth, Sayyid Ali studied under many scholars of Lamu and beyond. His teachers include: Sheikh Muhammad bin Ali Al-Maawy (d. 1955), Sayyid Abu Bakr bin Abdulrahman Al-Hussein (Mwenye Manswabu), Sayyid Muhammad Adnan Al-Ahdal(d.n), Sayyid Muhammad bin Abdallah Al-Rudainy (d. 1955) and the famous Mombasa scholar Sheikh Al-Amin Mazrui (d. 1947)[29]

Sayyid Ali Badawy never involved himself in anything else apart from academic activities. He pioneered many radical changes in the Islamic religious education system. He is credited to be the first scholar who brought the idea of an organized *madrasah* system in East Africa. Previously students used to study in the mosques and/or in houses of their teachers. He became the first principal of Madrastul Falah (of/in Mombasa) when it was opened in 1932. He also became the first headmaster of Madrassah al-Najah in Lamu in 1934.[30]

In 1948 C.E, he was appointed by the British colonial administration to be the Chief Kadhi of Kenya, a post he held briefly for two years before deciding to go back to his most important career- teaching.

[29] Swaleh M. Ali Badawy. (1989). *Ar-Riyadh baina madhihi wa hadhirihi.*

[30] It should be noted that while Habib Swaleh introduced the boarding system for his students at the Riyadha mosque, the education system remained the same where students learnt in the mosque and attended academic sessions at some scholars' houses. It was Sayyid Ali Badawy who introduced the *madrasah* system which students attended classes at a specific building constructed or converted into a school, students were awarded certificates upon completion of their studies.

Later on, he was invited to teach at the Muslim Academy of Zanzibar (1950's – 1960's). He lived there for a good number of years. [31]

Sayyid Ali Badawy was a man of great wisdom and intellect; he had memorized many of the classical Islamic works both in Jurisprudence, Grammar, Logic, Tafseer and Ahadith. He spent most of his time disseminating knowledge all over East Africa. Among his famous students include: The mufti of Oman, Sheikh Ahmad bin Hamad al – Khalili (b. 1942), his son Sharif Muhammad Bahsan (d. 1979), Shariff Abdulrahman Khitami (d. 2005) , Ustadh Harith Swaleh (b. 1935), Sayyid Muhammad Twalib Rudainy (d. 1981), Sayyid Umar bin Abdallah (Mwinyi Baraka)(d.n), Sheikh Mudhafar bin Maamun Nabhani (d.n) and many others.

Apart from being an eloquent public speaker, Sayyid Ali was also a prolific writer. He wrote many works which include:

- *Twareeqatul Sahlah li maarifatil Awqat wal Qiblah*
- *Bullatul Awam fee Ahkam dhawil Arham*
- *Khayru Nnida nadhm Qatru Nnada*
- *Twarfatul Ahbab nadhm Matnul Ahbab*
- *Mukhtasar rub'u nadhma*
- *Mandhumat Nuzhatu Nadhar fee Ilmil Mustalah Al-Athar*
- *Twarfatul Khallan fee Fannil Bayaan* among others.[32]

Sayyid Ali was considered to be among the greatest scholars of East and Central Africa. His long and fruitful life came to an end in 1988 at his home town of Lamu. He was buried in between the graves of his father and grandfather in Lamu.

[31] Harith S. Al – Maawy (personal communication, February 23, 2014)
[32] Unpublished works

SAYYID MUHAMMAD BIN SAYYID AHMAD BADAWY – SHARIFF DINI - (1908 – 1987)

Picture 1.7 Sayyid Muhammad's photograph

Sayyid Muhammad bin Sayyid Ahmad Badawy popularly known as Shariff Dini, is the second born son of Sayyid Ahmad Badawy. He was born in 1908 in Lamu.

Shariff Dini spent most of his time in his youth with his uncle Sayyid Aidarus from whom he acquired a lot of knowledge on Islamic traditional medicine. Similarly, he studied other Islamic sciences from his father Sayyid Ahmad Badawy, Sheikh Al-Amin bin Ali Al-Mazrui and many other scholars.[33]

Since his early age, Shariff Dini was an upright individual and as a result of this he earned a lot of respect from his peers and many other individuals who came to know him. His strictness in time-keeping was legendary.

Sharifu Dini become a very famous Muslim herbalist and his ability to cure many types of complex diseases earned him the title of *Doctor.*

He also possessed excellent management skills. He is credited to having been the first person who came up with the idea of out- sourcing Riyadha Mosque graduates to other *Madrasas* in the nearby villages of Lamu Islands and to other towns. In fact, he himself used to travel widely across Lamu Islands up to Somalia to streamline existed *Madrasas* and establish new ones . He sent his son Sayyid Ali (d. 2002) to teach in Kizingitini and afterwards sent him to Ndau where he started Madrasatul Jamaal. Later on he suggested Ustadh Harith Swaleh Al-Maawy be sent to Kizingitini as a replacement. He also opened Madrastul Islahi in Matondoni among others.[34]

He spent most of his time attending to the sick, helping the orphans , the widowed and travelling to propagate knowledge. Sharifu Dini had great love for poetry as he himself was a distinguished poet[35].

[33]Swaleh M. Ali Badawy. (1989). *Ar-Riyadh baina madhihi wa hadhirihi.*

[34] Harith S. Al – Maawy (personal communication, February 23, 2014)
[35] Hon. Abubakar M. Badawy (personal communication, November 2, 2013)

He wrote a book in Arabic language titled *Asrarul Hayat* and has written some treatises on Islamic traditional medicine and Swahili poetry.

Towards the end of his life, he suffered a severe stroke rendering him bedridden for a number of years. The great doctor and poet passed away in Malindi in the year 1987 and was buried in the cemetery adjacent to Masjid Shella.

SAYYID ABDULRAHMAN BIN SAYYID AHMAD BADAWY - SHARIF KHITAMI (1921 – 2005)

Picture 1.8 Sayyid Abdulrahman's photograph

Sayyid Abdulrahman also known as Sharif Khitami was the last child of Sayyid Ahmad Badawy through his wife Aisha bint Abdallah bin Muhammad Bakthir and was born in Lamu in 1921. He started his early education at the Riyadha Mosque where he gained academic and intellectual skills.

Shariff Khitami had memorized many of the Islamic works at an early age and would often be found close to his uncle Sayyid Aidarus. He also studied under Sayyid Muhammad Saggaf (n.d), Sayyid Muhammad Adnan Al-Ahdal, Sheikh Salim Basafar (n.d), Sheikh Muhammad bin Ahmad bin Ali Breik Al-lamy (Mombasa) (n.d), Sheikh Muhammad Abushir (Faza) (n.d)and Sheikh Suleyman Alawi (Zanzibar) (n.d). Later on, Sharif Khitami became an administrator of Madarastul Najaah Lamu.[36]

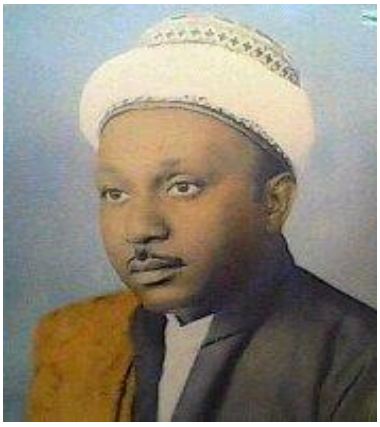
Shariff Khitami was not contented in staying at Lamu. He, as was the way of his grandfathers, decided to move and settled at Mombasa in the early 1950's. There, he disseminated his knowledge and cured the sick. Many people flocked his house in Baghani area of Mombasa for treatment.

Despite his busy schedules, he offered *darasas* (mosque lectures) in Masjid Anisa and Masjid Mandhry on daily basis. Sometimes people would go to his house for academic consultations or to seek some solutions on matters related to religion. He had taught many students. Some of his students include; Sayyid Ahmad bin Muhammad Al-Hussein (Badawy Mwenye wa Nana, d. 2013), Sheikh Ali bin Muhammad Darrani(n.d), Sheikh Al-Hafidh Uthman bin Muhammad Al-Hilal (d. 2013), Ustadh Umar bin Abdallah Al-lamy (n.d), Sheikh Hamid bin Muhammad Khalfan, Sheikh Hassan Makame (n.d) and Sayyid Muhammad bin Sayyid Hassan Al-Nadhir (Shariff Karama, n.d) .

[36]Swaleh M. Ali Badawy. (1989). *Ar-Riyadh baina madhihi wa hadhirihi.*

Sharif Khitami was known as one of relics of Islam in East Africa. This was due to his long service to the people irrespective of their creed. Shariff Khitami, in his last days became ill for a while and finally passed away in year 2005. He was buried near the graves of his father and grandfather in Lamu.

SAYYID MUHAMMAD BAHSAN BIN SAYYID ALI BADAWY - SHARIF BAHSAN (1925 – 1979)



Picture 1.9 Sayyid Muhammad Bahsan's photograph

Sayyd Muhammad Bahsan bin Sayyid Ali Badawy also known as Sharif Bahsan was born in Lamu in 1925. He was the first born child of Sayyid Ali Badawy. His mother, Siti Aisha, was the daughter of Sayyid Aidarus. Thus, he was a great grandson of Habib Swaleh through both parents.

Shariff Bahsan was raised up in a conducive learning environment surrounded by Habib Swaleh, Sayyid Ahmad Badawy, Sayyid Aidarus and his father Sayyid Ali Badawy. He had the early opportunity of acquring knowledge from its fountain. At the age of ten Shariff Bahsan had memorized the Qur'an and many classical Islamic works[37].

Shariff Bahsan had a sharp resemblance of his father's wisdom and intellect. By early adulthood the young scholar was already deeply rooted in Islamic sciences. He would mostly be seen in the company of his teachers especially Sayyid Muhammad Adnan Al-Ahdal, Sheikh Muhammad bin Ali Al-Maawy and (n.d) Sheikh Abdallah Khamis. He was also among the first students of Madrsatu al-Najaah in Lamu.

Upon the death of his mother at the age of nine, Shariff Bahsan, was nurtured under the direct care of his maternal grandfather Sayyid Aidarus who considered him like his own son and offered him all the love he could. Under the patronage of Sayyid Aidarus, Shariff Bahsan was able to prosper in all the fields of Islamic sciences including Islamic traditional medicine.

Due to the busy schedule of his father and uncles in and around East and Central Africa, Shariff Bahsan was made to bear the heavy responsibility of running the affairs of the Riyadha Mosque at a very young age. His time was mostly spent on teaching at the Riyadha Mosque. His students are

[37] Fatma M. Ali Badawy (personal communication, August 10, 2013)

scattered all over East Africa and beyond. Among them include: Ustadh Muhammad bin Shariff Sayyid Al-Beidh (d. 2013), Ustadh Muhsin bin Sayyid Ali Badawy (his brother) (n.d), Sayyid Abdalla Saggaf (n.d) and Ustadh Sheikh Swaleh Bahsan (b. 1954) (his son) and many others. He also had a talent in writing in both prose and poetry, his works include:

- *Eidhahul Ghawamidh lil Mubtadi fee Ilmil Faraidh*
- *Tas - heelul Adeelat fee Istikhraj Awqaat Swalaat wal Qiblah*
- *Eitihaful Anam fee ma yataalaqu bee Swiyaam*
- *Qesswatul Meeraj*
- *Hidayatul Mubtade'een fee Seeyrati Sayyidil Mursaleen*. Among others.[38]

He had planned to build a separate building from the Riyadha Mosque for studies and academic purposes. Unfortunately, when the Riyadha Academy (Maahad Thaqafah Islami) opened its doors in 1981, Shariff Bahsan had passed away just a year earlier[39]. His sudden death during the lifetime of his father was a great loss to the people of Lamu. At the time of his death in 1979, he was 54 years of age. He was finally buried near the graves of his father, grandfather and great grandfather in Lamu.

[38] Unpublished works
[39] Abulkadir M. Ali Badawy (personal communication, August 10, 2013)

SAYYID HUSSEIN BIN SAYYID AHMAD BADAWY (1933 -)

Picture 2.0 Sayyid Hussein's photograph

Sayyid Hussein was born on the 25th June, 1933 in Lamu.His first Qur'an teachers were Al-Habib Umar bin Alwy Al-Aideed and Al-Hafidh Ali Swabu El-Famawy.

Sayyid Hussein also studied Islamic sciences at the famous Najaah Islamic School of Lamu under His brothers Sayyid Ali Badawy and Shariff Abdulrahman Khitami. His other teachers at the Islamic School were Sheikh Abdallah Khamis and Sheikh Muhammad bin Sheikh Al-Waely (d. 2014). Sayyid Hussein's exemplary character, knowledge and experiences earned him a place at Najaah Islamic school as a teacher. In the year 1950, Sayyid Hussein travelled to Dar-es-Salaam , Tanzania where he dwelt in Islamic propagation and academic activities. With the help of his younger brother Sayyid Ahmad Ahmad Badawy (Mwenye Baba), they opened a very successful Islamic School in Dar-es-Salaam which they named Madrastul Badawiyah[40].

Sayyid Hussein's rise in fame and recognition made the political elites of Dar-es-Salaam very uncomfortable with him. Thus, he was forced to migrate to Zanzibar where he stayed for a few years while continuing with propagation of Islam and engaging his subjects to academic activities. During the Zanzibar revolution of 1964, he was again forced to move to another town which is known as Aruwa in northern Uganda. In Aruwa, he initiated an Islamic School and also involved himself in some business activities. As if destiny had conspired to associate Sayyid Hussein's life with revolutions, coincidentally, another Ugandan coup made him again to shift his camp and this time at Congo – Zaire. There, he started afresh another Madrasa . His tentacles of Islamic da'wah activities spread to the neighboring country of Rwanda where he constructed a mosque and he named it Masjid Badawy. In 1981, he spent a year in the Sudan as a teacher[41].

[40] Swaleh M. Ali Badawy (personal communication, August 20, 2013)
[41] Ibid

After much travelling and tremendous da'wah activities across all East and Central Africa, Sayyid Hussein, finally decided to settle at Lamu. But as the famous saying goes that "an Islamic teacher has no leave nor retirement", in 1995 a delegation from the town of Lushoto in Tanzania requested him to head their newly opened Islamic centre. Sayyid Hussein Badawy accepted the request and moved to Lushoto where he still lives to date. However, Sayyid Hussein, due to his dedication toward da'wah activities, frequently makes visits Dar-es-Salaam, Zanzibar, Aruwa, Kigali and Lamu to supervise his many scattered projects on madrasas and related Islamic centers.

Upon the demise of his brother Sharif Khitami who was the head of Riyadha Mosque prior to his death in 2005, Sayyid Hussein Badawy, by virtue of being the eldest descendant of the Habib Swaleh's family, became the head of the Riyadha Mosque and all its affiliated institutions.

Sayyid Hussein is recognized as being a very humble servant of Islam and is blessed with an extra-ordinary beautiful voice. His anasheeds and qaswaids (islamic poems and songs) are well known across the globe. He prefers to be called *Khaadimul Maqam* instead of *Swahibul Maqam* the common title of the head of Riyadha Mosque.

Sayyid Hussein Badawy continues to head several institutions including; Riyadha Mosque and the Islamic centers of Lushoto, Dar-es-Salaam and Aruwa.

SAYYID AHMAD BIN SAYYID AHMAD BADAWY – MWENYEBABA - (1939 -)

Picture 2.1 Sayyid Ahmad Ahmad's photograph

Mwenye Baba was born on the day his father, Sayyid Ahmad Badawy, died on the 9th of February 1939 Hence, he was named by his father's famous name- *Mwenye Baba*.

Mwenye Baba grew up studying under his six elder brothers with close supervision of Sayyid Ali Badawy, Shariff Muhammad Badawy and Sayyid Abdulrahman. He was also enrolled at the Najaah Islamic School in Lamu and frequently used to attend classes of Lamu's most reputable scholars of the time; Sayyid Muhammad Adnan Al-Ahdal, Sayyid Muhammad Ahmad Saggaf, Sayyid Umar Ahmad Saggaf and Sayyid Muhammad Twalib Rudainy (d. 1981) among others. His main Qur'an teachers were Maalim Muhammad Uthman Al-Qumury and Maalim Ahmad Salmin Bagufa[42].

Mwenye Baba travelled to Zanzibar and studied under Al-Habib Umar bin Ahmad bin Sumeit, Sayyid Abil Hassan Jamaalu Leyl, Sheikh Suleyman Al-Alawi and Sayyid Umar bin Abdallah Al-Sheikh Abi Bakr bin Salim.[43]

Mwenye Baba began his teaching career as a Qur'anic teacher in the Ribat of Riyadha Mosque and Najaah Muslim School. He was later ordered by Sayyid Ali Badawy to offer a session on Qur'an translation in Kiswahili during the month of Ramadhan after Asr prayers in the Ribat of Riyadha Mosque[44].

In 1963 at the age of 24 years , he was invited by the Secretary General of Muslim World League

[42] Swaleh M. Ali Badawy (personal communication, August 20, 2013)
[43] Ibid
[44] Ahmad A. Badawy (personal communication, February 2, 2013)

Sheikh Muhammad Surur Al-Saban to Saudi Arabia where he performed the Pilgrimage, the fifth pillar of Islam, which he has never missed ever since by the grace of Allah (glory be to Him). At the time of his pilgrimage he was helping his elder brother Sayyid Hussein Badawy as a teacher in Dar-es-Salaam. Upon Sayyid Hussein's migration from Dar-es-Salaam, Mwenye Baba moved to Mambrui and joined his nephew Ustadh Muhammad Shariff Saeed Al-Beidh to teach at Annur Islamic School.[45]

The invitation to Saudi Arabia was a great opportunity for Mwenye Baba. He had the chance to meet Saudi and Hadhrami scholars and attended their academic sessions. There, he studied under Hejazi scholars such as Habib Muhammad Amin Kutbi, Al-Habib Hassan Fada'q, Al-Habib Alwy Al-Malky and Hadhramout scholars Al-Habib Abdulqader bin Ahmad Saggaf, Al-Habib Ahmad Mashhur Al-Haddad, Sayyid Salim Khard and Al-Habib Shatry.

Furthermore, the visit to Saudi Arabia precipitated frequent visits to Egypt, Mauritania, the Gulf countries and Comoros Islands where he met many distinguished Islamic and academic personalities. Mwenye Baba grew up to become one of East Africa's most famous and distinguished scholars. Apart from being a very effective teacher, he is an eloquent orator and also loves to write; his works includes:

- *Annusus Swarihah feel Aqeedati Swahihah*
- *Mandhumat Takhfeedh Ase'er fee Bayan baadh Dharurat Ashe'er*
- *Tarweehul Fikar Sharh Mandhumat Takhfeed Ase'er*
- *Al-Maurid Al-Badawy fee Al-Maulid An-nabawy*
- *Annujum Zahiyyah wa Al-Laaly Al-Bahiyah fee Ikhtiswar Al-Qawaid Al-fqhiyah*
- *Dhul fiqar*
- *Aswaa Musa*
- *Hata Anta*.[46]

He is a very talented poet in Arabic and Swahili languages, lyricist and is blessed with a very beautiful voice. Mwenye Baba is currently the deputy head of the Riyadha Mosque and also runs his own Najah Islamic Center and Technical College situated in Malindi. His students are scattered all over the world.

[45] Ibid
[46] Unpublished works

TERMINOLOGIES

Baba (Swahili) – Father

Dari ya Mtanga (Swahili - Amu dialect) - Lit. Castle of the Soil.

Du'a (Arabic) - Lit. Invocation; an act of supplication, solemn prayers/worship.

Fundi (Swahili) - Expert

Habib (Arabic) - Beloved (masc.)

I'tikaf (Arabic) - An act of worship practiced by Muslims consisting of a period of retreat in a mosque for a certain period of time in accordance with the believer's own wish

Khaadimul Maqam (Arabic) - Lit. Servant of the place

Madrasah (Arabic) - School

Mihrab (Arabic) - a semicircular niche in the wall of a mosque that indicates the *qibla*; that is, the direction of the Kaaba in Mecca and hence the direction that Muslim should face when praying

Mwenye (Swahili - Amu dialect) - Particularly refers to the descendants of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him)

Qadhi – Muslim Jurist/Judge

Riyadha (pronounced Riyadhwa - Arabic*)* - Garden

Sayyid (Arabic) - Lit. Master (particularly refers to the descendants of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him)

Sharifu – Descendant/s of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him)

Swaahibul Maqam (Arabic) - Lit. Owner of the place

Abbreviations:

n.d: no date

R.A.: Radhiallahu anhu; may Allah be pleased with him/her (this is an Islamic ritual made after mentioning the names of sahabas (Companions of the Perophet).

SAW: Swala llahu aleihi wa salaam: Peace of Allah be upon him. (this is an Islamic ritual that requires one to recite it after mentioning the name of Prophet Muhammad)

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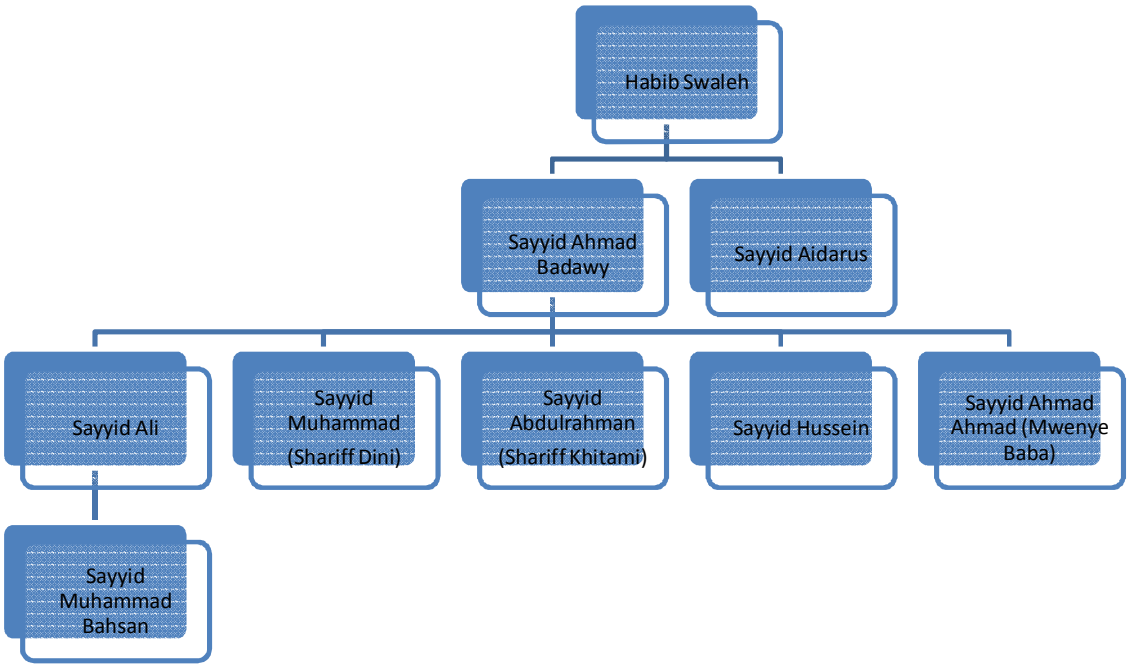

Picture 2.2 Habib Swaleh's family tree (this is in accordance with the children and grandchildren named in this booklet only. Habib Swaleh had more children and many other grandchildren through his sons Sayyid Ahmad Badawy and Sayyid Aidarus).

Picture 2.3 Photograph of the old Riyadha Mosque (around 1940's)